WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS
FOR SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES

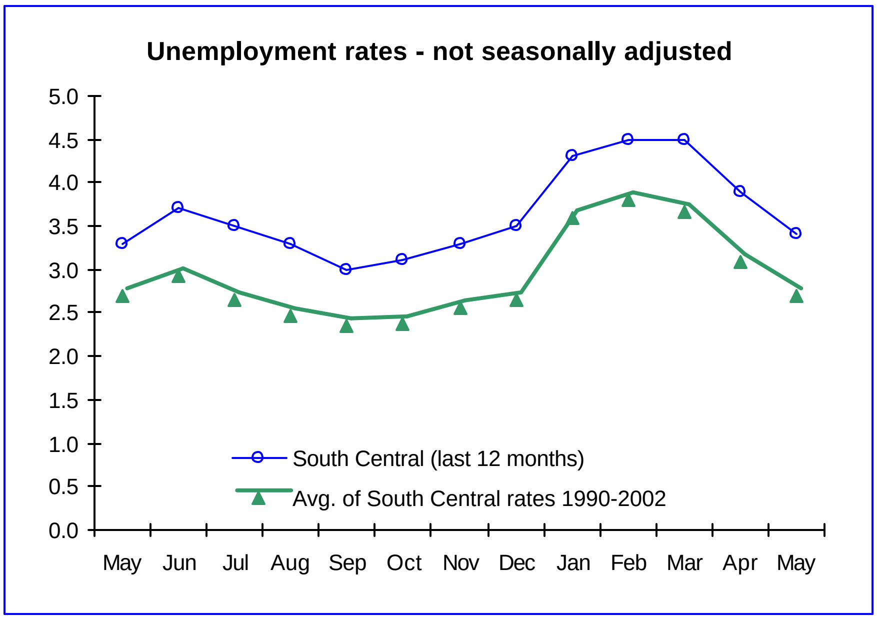
June 2003

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Where are the May flowers?

In May, **Wisconsin**'s unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) fell to 5.1 percent, the lowest it has been since last November. The estimates below register nearly 60,000 more employed people this May than last May, but that was not enough to keep up with increase of 6,000 unemployed persons, so the unemployment rate was 0.1 percent higher. Similarly, the employment by industry estimates (on page 2) show more jobs this May than this April in nearly every private sector industry, while signals remain more mixed when comparing last May to this May. Over-the-year gains in education & health services and the "other services" component of information, professional, business & other services are overshadowed by over-the-year losses in construction and manufacturing.

The unemployment rate in **Columbia County** has fallen for three consecutive months, but this May's rate was higher than last May's rate and remained above the typical May level.



Job gains between April and May were concentrated in trade and leisure & hospitality. Construction employment tends to be fairly seasonal, but Columbia County's construction employment estimates have been well above last year's figures since January. (The opposite is true of the state as a whole.) Since last May, the leisure & hospitality industry grew twice as fast and has added at least five times as many jobs as any other sector.

Dane County reported the lowest unemployment rate in Wisconsin, and was as far above typical levels as it has been at any point since last summer. Construction added more jobs than any sector in May. Most were seasonal, but this May still saw 400 more construction jobs than last May did. Although April-to-May job growth in financial activities and professional & business services were not overwhelming, over-the-year gains have been big enough (both numerically and proportionally) to lend hope to unemployed and underemployed graduates.

Labor force estimates - not seasonally adjusted

	Wisconsin			South Central			Columbia			Dane		
	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change
Civilian Labor Force**	3,077,100	940	65,900	453,000	1,180	15,400	29,100	140	870	289,900	340	12,000
Employed	2,921,200	23,200	59,900	437,400	3,100	14,200	27,600	470	750	282,300	620	11,100
Unemployed	155,900	-22,250	6,000	15,500	-1,910	1,220	1,580	-320	110	7,600	-280	870
Unemployment rate (%)	5.1	-0.7	0.1	3.4	-0.5	0.1	5.4	-1.1	0.2	2.6	-0.1	0.2

	Dodge			Jefferson			Marquette			Sauk		
	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change
Civilian Labor Force**	46,100	-30	300	42,500	-210	190	7,700	-30	210	37,600	960	1,850
Employed	43,600	350	230	40,600	70	140	7,100	120	190	36,200	1,480	1,760
Unemployed	2,500	-370	80	1,900	-280	60	540	-150	20	1,380	-520	90
Unemployment rate (%)	5.4	-0.8	0.1	4.5	-0.6	0.1	7.0	-1.9	0.0	3.7	-1.5	0.1

** Includes labor force participants residing in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Numbers 2,000 and greater are rounded to nearest 100. Numbers under 2,000 are rounded to nearest 10. Sub-units may not add to totals due to rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers. Results are rounded. For more information call (608) 242-4885 or email dan.barroilhet@dwd.state.wi.us.

DWSI-13480-E-P (R.6/2003)

While **Dodge County** saw its unemployment rate fall rather sharply for the second month in a row, the gap between current rates and typical rates remains greater there than elsewhere in the South Central region. April-to-May job gains in construction seem mostly seasonal, with this May looking much like last May. Over the last 12 months, education & health services and leisure & hospitality have lead job growth. Many of the county's manufacturers are geared less toward consumers and more toward businesses that are starting up, expanding or retooling. Fairly healthy consumer spending on the national scene helps Dodge County less than a turnaround in business investment might. Since 2001, output increases have outstripped business investment and job gains, suggesting that employers think they can wring more productivity from investments made in the 1990s before they hire more people or expand capacity with further investment.

In **Jefferson County**, the unemployment rate dropped and returned closer to typical levels than it has been in a few months. From April to May, the increase in construction jobs and retail & wholesale trade jobs was much swifter than the overall increases between last May and this May. Leisure & hospitality was the only sector to add many jobs over the last twelve-month period. Even that growth has not been enough to compensate for the loss of manufacturing jobs. Last May's all-industries employment estimate was 930 jobs greater than this May's figure and last May's manufacturing estimate was 940 jobs greater than this May's estimate. Apart from manufacturing, Jefferson County's job market might appear stable.

Marquette County's unemployment rate fell sharply in May, bringing it lower than it has been since November and closer to typical levels than it has been at any time in the last year. The abrupt jump in construction jobs between April and May masks the fact the sector has no more jobs than it had last May. Manufacturing hasn't added any jobs since November, but it has added more jobs over the last year than any other sector. The trade sector has grown quickly in proportional terms over the last 12 months, but of roughly 30 jobs added since last May, nearly 20 came between April and May, so their permanence remains to be seen. Similarly, leisure & hospitality gained nearly 50 jobs from April to May, while being barely 30 jobs over last May's estimate.

In **Sauk County**, the unemployment rate dipped below the typical May level. For the last twelve months, it has been within half a percent above or below typical monthly levels. Manufacturing, retail & wholesale trade and construction were among leading job-growth sectors when comparing April to May, but all three sectors posted job estimates lower than last May's estimates. Since January, the trade sector has been something like 450 to 550 jobs below last year's figures. Because the estimates no longer distinguish between retail trade and wholesale trade, it is not possible to determine with certainty where the softness lies. The leisure & hospitality sector added roughly 1,100 jobs between April and May and nearly 2,400 jobs between last May and this May. Altogether, the all-industries job estimate rose about half that much, indicating an increasing concentration in that sector.

Employment by industryestimates - not seasonally adjusted

	Wisconsin			South Central			Columbia			Dane		
	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change
Total jobs, all indstries*	2,799,500	32,100	-200	434,900	4,700	7,600	21,800	460	200	303,200	1,800	7,400
Const., min'g & nat. resources	123,600	10,900	-7,500	22,000	2,100	440	1,170	70	60	15,000	1,400	400
Manufacturing	516,100	1,300	-10,400	60,600	-50	50	4,900	40	-110	28,800	0	1,800
Trade (wholesale & retail)	432,300	6,600	2,700	61,000	410	-1,050	3,300	120	-90	40,900	0	-400
Transport, Wrhsing, Utilities	106,400	1,800	-100	11,300	210	50	740	50	-30	7,400	300	1,100
Financial activities	156,200	1,500	3,100	29,100	530	940	580	0	40	25,500	500	1,000
Education & health services	362,300	-700	6,000	43,500	-20	780	2,600	-10	10	28,700	0	600
Leisure & hospitality	245,100	12,300	-700	42,800	2,300	3,400	2,500	190	310	24,600	600	300
Info, prof, bus. & other srvcs	432,700	1,800	8,000	68,200	160	2,100	2,100	60	-30	55,800	0	3,100
Government	424,800	-3,400	-1,300	96,500	-900	900	4,000	-60	40	76,500	-800	500
	Dodge			**Jefferson**			**Marquette**			**Sauk**		
	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change	May 2003	1-month change	1-year change
Total jobs, all indstries*	33,100	420	-360	35,500	220	-930	4,100	110	80	37,300	1,730	1,200
Const., min'g & nat. resources	2,300	240	40	1,280	90	40	260	60	-10	1,950	230	-90
Manufacturing	10,100	-10	-670	9,200	-150	-940	1,300	0	70	6,300	70	-100
Trade (wholesale & retail)	3,900	60	-70	6,200	80	70	490	20	30	6,200	130	-580
Transport, Wrhsing, Utilities	1,010	10	30	1,220	10	-40	60	0	0	850	50	-10
Financial activities	710	0	-40	950	10	20	120	10	0	1,230	20	-80
Education & health services	4,200	10	240	4,500	-40	-120	280	0	-10	3,300	30	50
Leisure & hospitality	2,700	180	150	3,400	180	220	490	50	30	9,100	1,100	2,400
Info, prof, bus. & other srvcs	2,800	0	-160	4,500	50	-140	230	0	-20	2,800	50	-650
Government	5,300	-70	120	4,200	0	-40	860	-20	-10	5,700	60	290

*Includes jobs with employers in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary.
Numbers 2,000 and greater are rounded to nearest 100. Numbers under 2,000 are rounded to nearest 10. Sub-units may not add to totals due to rounding
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